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1. [redacted] release from a Polish-American news agency [redacted]

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"17 Feb 54

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"There is now in Poland a split among so-called pro-government Catholics. This is proof that the so-called Progressive Catholic Movement is made up of people who are seeking only money and political power. Four months ago the government ordered the leaders of the four separate collaborator groups to unite under one organization called the Main Committee of Priests and Lay Catholics of the National People's Front. This organization was to have branches at the state and county (powiatowymi) levels. The four groups making up this organization are the Lay Catholics, the Pax group, the Patriotic Priests of the Fighters for Freedom and Democracy Association and a new group of pseudo-Catholics. At the first meeting of the new united organization a quarrel began over which of the four groups is the most distinguished. The government keeps this quarrel alive in order to keep even the collaborating Catholics weak."

2. The Patriotic Priests (Ksieza Patriotci) mentioned in the release are a small but tremendously influential group. They have the full support of the government. Whenever a loyal church official is arrested or incapacitated, the government immediately appoints one of the Patriotic Priests to take over his post. [redacted] results from the Vatican policy of not naming a replacement whenever one of the Church's high members is arrested. Instead, the Vatican apparently holds the position that as long as a particular bishop or cardinal is alive, even though he may be in prison, he is still the only person entitled to his particular position. Consequently a high office in the Church may become vacant for an extended period of time; and the government, taking full

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advantage of the situation, appoints one of its Patriotic Priests to the post. These Patriotic Priests are most often vicari, or administrative priests, who are in a good position to watch all the activities of each diocese. When the Bishop of Slask (Slessien) died in January 1954, his position was immediately filled ad interim by one of the Patriotic Priest vicari.

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3. Loyal priests who oppose the Patriotic Priests are called "American Catholics" or "Vatican Catholics." They soon find themselves stripped of all their effectiveness. There is, consequently, a tremendous temptation for a young priest who wants to rise in the Church to join the Patriotic Priests and enjoy the ensuing affluence. The Polish government's most common bait, as a matter of fact, to lure clergymen, educators and intellectuals to its support, is prestige and material prosperity.

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[redacted] a poet and novelist. Around the year 1949, [redacted] was persuaded by someone in the government to begin writing Communist propaganda into his works. In return for writing what he was told to write, he was given a villa and an automobile. Although his friends were disappointed, they understood the temptation. After a single year of collaborating, however, he found that he could no longer stand the frightful lack of freedom, and he escaped [redacted] His letter [redacted] stated that he now lives in poverty compared to what he had in Poland, but that freedom is worth his loss of prestige.

4. The Pax group mentioned in the news release is a collection of left-wing intellectuals who are not full-fledged Communists. The group was founded just after World War II and is headed by its original founder, (fnu) Piasecki. Piasecki is about 34 years old. He fought in the underground against the Germans during World War II and collaborated with the Soviets during the closing phase of the war. He was one of the first prominent Poles to cooperate with the Communist party, and [redacted] he honestly believed at that time he was doing the thing which would help Poland the most. Pax is a small, aggressive but conglomerate group. Its main thesis is that the Catholic Church and the Polish Communist government can coexist peacefully together.

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5. [redacted] this news release is probably reliable. The split among the four groups is probably a continuing condition, and it seems likely that the government would want to keep the leaders squabbling among themselves.

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